

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

THESSALONIKI, GREECE  
DECEMBER 2011

## DISPOSITION OF REMAINS REPORT

The following information is submitted to provide current data on Greek Law concerning the disposition of remains:

### A. MAXIMUM PERIOD BEFORE BURIAL

According to the regulations of the Greek Decree of May 18, 1935, "Regarding Necroscopy", promulgated by the Greek Health Center, Ministry of Hygiene:

(1) When the body is embalmed, burial should take place within (20) days if the embalmed body is not placed in a zinc container.

(2) When the body is not embalmed, the minimum period before burial is twelve (12) hours, and the maximum period is twenty (20) hours, during summer period (May-October) and thirty (30) hours during winter period (November-April).

### B. EMBALMING

According to the above decree, bodies should be embalmed prior to incipience of decay, or within 48 hours after death. However, bodies may be temporarily preserved at refrigeration facilities, which are located at the University of Thessaloniki Medical School, for a maximum of ten (10) days prior to embalming. Bodies are embalmed at the morgue that is located at the University of Thessaloniki Medical School. In exceptional cases, if shipment of remains is desired, bodies may be disinterred and embalmed after burial takes place. This procedure can be effected only upon authorization of the District Attorney of the area and with the approval of the Coroner of Thessaloniki who must attend the disinterment. The Coroner of Thessaloniki then issues the appropriate certificates that are required for the exportation of remains.

### C. AUTOPSY

Autopsy is mandatory when a violent or sudden death occurs, or when the deceased was hospitalized less than 24 hours, except when there is a diagnosis.

Coroners employed by the Greek Ministry of Justice and Universities are responsible for performing autopsies. Autopsies are authorized by District Attorneys.

### D. CREMATION

Religious and Greek civil laws do not permit cremation in Greece. Therefore, there are no cremation facilities in Greece. Very few local funeral homes may take the body for cremation to neighboring Balkan countries, where cremation is permitted.

### E. CASKETS AND CONTAINERS

When the remains of a deceased person are to be transported out of Greece, the remains are placed in a zinc casket that is hermetically sealed by soldering. Hermetically-sealed metal caskets, such as those used in the United States, are not manufactured in Greece. Although these caskets are now available in a few funeral homes, they are seldom used owing to their (up to \$4,000) high price. Therefore, a simple metal container prepared locally, and made airtight by soldering, is commonly used. The casket is enclosed in a hardwood coffin of approximately 30 mm thickness. For shipment by air, the wooden coffin is placed in a wooden shipping case.

### F. EXPORTATION OF REMAINS

Local requirements for the exportation of human remains are as follows (as described in Articles 115, 116, 117 and 118 of the Royal Decree of February 21, 1940, regarding Health Regulations of Land and Sea):

1. Embalming of remains.
2. Enclosure of the remains as described in paragraph D above in the presence of a representative of the Customs House (according to Greek Customs and Foreign Exchange regulations).
3. Permit issued by the Administration of Social Services, Ministry of Hygiene and Social Services, for transfer of remains.
4. Special permit for exporting the body, issued by the Customs House.
5. Death Certificate issued by the local Registrars Office.
6. Certificate of Embalming issued by the Coroner.

## 6. COSTS

All dollar costs have been converted from the cost in local currency (EUROS) at the current rate of exchange of 0.82 (EURO TO DOLLAR).

**NOTE:** The grave costs are representing the main Thessaloniki Christian Orthodox cemetery called "Anastaseos tou Kyriou". In smaller cemeteries, and other cities or towns in Northern Greece, prices are lower.

1. Local interment without embalming in temporary (rented) grave:

CLASSES	EUR.	DOLS
<b>A. FIRST CLASS</b>		
Burial Expenses	940	1,146
Grave Cost	1,140	1,390
<b>B. SECOND CLASS</b>		
Burial Expenses	555	677
Grave Cost	755	921

2. Local interment without embalming in permanent grave (purchased family grave):

CLASSES	EUR.	DOLS
<b>A. FIRST CLASS</b>		
Burial Expenses	940	1,146
Grave Cost	35,000	42,683
TOTAL:	35,940	43,829
<b>B. SECOND CLASS</b>		
Burial Expenses	555	677
Grave Cost	28,000	34,146
TOTAL:	28,555	34,823

**NOTE:** If price of permanent grave is paid in one installment, there is a 10% discount. It can be paid in installments as follows: 40% in one installment, and then the balance of 60% in 6 installments.

The permit fee for the construction of a permanent grave costs EUROS 100 (\$122).

**3. EMBALMING:** EUROS 250 \$305

4. Preparation for shipment (including embalming, documentation, container, casket and coffin, delivery to airport and funeral home fee)(airport fee is separate):

EUROS 3,500 \$4,268

5. When death occurs in another city of the Thessaloniki consular district, remains may be transferred to Thessaloniki for preparation. Estimates of transportation costs between Thessaloniki and the major cities of Northern Greece (Thessaloniki consular district) are as follows:

The cost is approximately EURO 0,60 (\$0.73) per kilometer. Transportation costs are calculated on a return trip basis. To each of following amounts, an addition of EUROS300 (\$366) should be calculated, for funeral home expenses.

CITY	KLMS FROM THESS.	EUROS.	DOLS
Polygyros	72 X 2 = 144	86.40	105.36
Xanthi	219 X 2 = 438	262.80	320.48
Komotini	276 X 2 = 552	331.20	403.90
Alexandroupolis	341 X 2 = 682	409.20	499.02
Kavala	165 X 2 = 330	198.00	241.46
Serres	95 X 2 = 190	114.00	139.02
Drama	155 X 2 = 330	198.00	241.46
Kilkis	50 x 2 = 100	60.00	73.17
Veria	75 X 2 = 150	90.00	109.76
Edessa	89 X 2 = 178	106.80	130.24
Katerini	69 X 2 = 138	82.80	100.97
Grevena	188 X 2 = 376	225.60	275.12
Kozani	135 X 2 = 270	162.00	197.56
Kastoria	207 X 2 = 414	248.40	302.93
Florina	160 X 2 = 320	192.00	234.15

## 6. AIRFREIGHT

The average weight of casket and containers required for export of remains is 250 kilograms (approx. 500 pounds). Listed below are prices for air freight shipment from Thessaloniki to various points in the continental United States:

FROM THESS. TO	EUROS	DOLS
New York 9X250=	2,250	2,743
Washington 10X250=	2,500	3,048
Chicago 10X250=	2,500	3,048
Dallas 11X250=	2,750	3,353
San Francisco 12X250=	3,000	3,658

## 7. TOTAL COST

Below are prices for preparation (including embalming) and freight of shipment of remains from Thessaloniki to U.S. cities:

THESSALONIKI TO	DOLLARS
New York	5,611
Washington	5,982
Chicago	6,100
Dallas	6,403
San Francisco	6,973

## H. EXHUMATION AND SHIPMENT

In accordance with the regulations contained in the Code of Municipal Cemeteries, Chapter C, "Exhumation of Bones", Article 15, Paragraph A:

"The exhumation of bones of deceased people buried in local cemeteries, in graves rented for three years, is done three years after burial."

Article 4 of the above Code states:

"Regarding the three-year burial, if, within three months of the expiration of the three-year period, the relatives of the deceased do not take any action as to the exhumation of the bones, the cemetery service, at its own initiative, exhumes the bones whenever they find it necessary, and then the bones are placed in a charnel house.

Extensions of the exhumation of bones may be requested at the following cost:

TIME	CLASS	EUROS	DOLS
1 year	First	240	292.68
	Second	630	768.29
	Third	810	987.80
2 years	First	160	195.12
	Second	310	378.00
	Third	420	512.19
3 years	First	65	79.27
	Second	180	219.51
	Third	210	256.00

- K Extension of the three-year period is authorized only by Mayor of the city.
- K If authorized, you pay additional 50% of the third year, depending on class.
- K The use of refrigerator is EURO 75 (\$91) per day and the hall they keep the dead is EUROS 55 (\$67) per day.
- K Exhumation costs EUROS 55 (\$67) for placement of bones into the piscine, and EUROS 100 (\$122) for placement of bones in a box and into the mortuary chapel.
- K For the first 3 years cost is EUROS 55 (\$67) per year. For additional years, EUROS 100 (\$122) per year.
- K If exhumation is desired prior to the three-year prescribed period, it can be affected only upon the authorization of the District Attorney of the area.
- K. Those buried in (perpetual) family lots, are buried indefinitely or until another member of the family is to be buried in the same grave.
- K. Preparation of bones for shipment to the United States, not including airfreight, is approximately EUROS 2,100 (\$2,561). Airfreight is estimated per kilo of weight cost given in Paragraph 6.

